

Minutes
2024 Annual General Meeting
Monday 13th May 2024 at 7.00pm

With the permission of all present this meeting was recorded.

24/01: Present: Cllr Bruce Carlisle, Cllr Jason Crowther, Cllr Phil Davies, Cllr Phil Eynon, Cllr Victoria Evans, Cllr Liz Williams. Cty Cllr Di Clements. Clerk – Liz Lesnianski

Meeting commenced with Cllr Evans in the Chair.

24/02: Apologies for Absence: None

24/03: Minutes of the Last Meeting: These were unanimously agreed as correct. Signed by Chair.

24/04: Confirmation of Co-option of New Councillor: The Chair welcomed Bruce to Martletwy Community Council and the confirmation of co-option was approved.

24/05: Approval of Accounts: The Clerk presented the financial accounts for the year for Martletwy Community Council. Cllr Cole asked if anyone had any questions. Accounts unanimously approved,. Signed by the Chairman

24/06: Chairman's Report:

I would like to start by thanking councillors, including our County Councillor for all their hard work this year and to welcome our new councillor Bruce Carlisle.

This year has been another busy year which has seen us work together to achieve a number of positive things for our communities.

In April 2023 to coincide with the Woodland Trust & PCNP 75yr Anniversary, we were given a number of trees and we donated a sapling for every child in the ward. These were successfully planted throughout the community.

Warm Spaces events continued to be popular and thanks to Cllr Williams for her work in relation to this. Funding did come to a close, but the Warm Space Coffee Mornings are to return, organised by Cllr Williams.

Again, thanks to Cllr Williams for a successful well attended Coronation picnic (despite the weather) on 8th May and for organising the Christmas Carol Service at Lawrenny Church.

We agreed our Councillor Training Policy written by Chair and this was published online as per requirements.

We looked to review the frequency and venues of our meetings to try and enhance public engagement at meetings. We voted to drop the August meeting and have at least one virtual meeting per year. The Council are still working on ways to hold meetings at venues across the ward, changing the weekday and time of meeting with the hope of having more of our communities attending.

Councillors met with PCC Officers in relation to the Ironman event - timing and access issues. Discussions continue to be challenging but following a further meeting between Councillors and Officers at PCC regarding feedback on Ironman, we hope to move forward with this and hope they will take note of local community concerns.

A boundary review meeting was attended, and the Council will put in a response to the review. Merging with other community council is being considered. There is a prolonged period of consultation, with a timetable for the final review report being mid-2024. There will be interesting times ahead for the local authority at town and community council level.

Once again we assisted with traffic management of the community charity fireworks night event and will look to do this again in 2024.

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In November we also met with Bluestone which was a very informative and collaborative meeting. Further work is to be done into 2024 to create additional community engagement opportunities.

The Council were frustrated with the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) enforcing mandatory payments to councillors for household costs and stationery. This places further financial burden on electors. In January hard decisions had to be made regarding the Precept. Due to unprecedented cost increases councillors had to make the difficult decision to raise the precept considerably. Upcoming costs in the next financial year include the Service Level Agreements for both play areas; replacement of the fencing around Lawrenny play area; IRPW mandatory payments.

Service level agreements with PCC for the play areas in Martletwy and Lawrenny continue but need to be reviewed due to the financial burden on the council and we need to consider options regarding the way forward in relation to these areas in the future.

Audit of the Annual Return remains extremely challenging due to the lack of advice guidance and support provided at a higher level. Finding and retaining appropriate Internal Auditors remains challenging for many community councils, although MCC are currently working with someone who is excellent, and we would like to take this opportunity of thanking them. There appears to be no consideration given to the size of councils and the clerk hours to support them, the onus of responsibility on small community councils can at times feel overwhelming, not helped by the lack of advice and guidance as previously mentioned, however we continue to work hard to meet the obligations placed upon us by the Welsh Government. I would like to thank our Clerk for her hard work and perseverance in relation to the audit and the challenges she has faced over the past few months, as well as thanking her for her continued support to the council.

We collaborated with our County Councillor on a Newsletter to increase engagement with local community, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr Clements who continues to offer support and good relations with officers at County Council.

We continue to make invaluable contribution to the planning process, however there are still some frustrations in relation to the speed of response in relation to enforcement issues raised.

Thanks also to Cllr Davies for arranging some well attended defib and CPR training and to Cllr Eynon and Cllr Clements for their continued support of the lunch club.

I believe we are now in a strong position to offer support to our local community and work to enhance our area for residents throughout our ward.

24/07: Election of Chair: Cllr Evans proposed Cllr Williams for the position of Chair. Proposal seconded by Cllr Eynon. All present voted in favour. Cllr Williams elected as Chair.

24/08: Election of Vice Chair: Cllr Evans noted the Vice Chair position has in recent years been the newest Councillor. This was the case for herself, Cllr Davies, and Cllr Williams. Cllr Davies proposed Cllr Carlisle for the position of Vice Chair. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Evans. The majority voted in favour of the proposal. Cllr Carlisle was elected as Vice Chair.

24/09: Appointment of Council Representatives:

a) One Voice Wales Representative: Following discussion there was unanimous agreement no one Councillor would represent the Community Council at One Voice Wales Area Meetings. Councillors would endeavour to take it in turn to attend during the year.

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2024 Annual General Meeting
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24/10: Review of Council Policies:

a. Financial Regulations: Clerk presented the Financial Regulations Policy. Cllr Evans proposed re-adopting the policy as presented. Cllr Williams seconded the proposal. All in favour.

b. Risk Management: Clerk presented the Risk Management Policy. Cllr Evans proposed re-adopting the policy as presented. Cllr Williams seconded the proposal. All in favour.

c. Standing Orders: Clerk presented the Standing Orders. These are as re-adopted in September 2023, following changes made by One Voice Wales, Cllr Evans proposed re-adopting the policy as presented. Cllr Williams seconded the proposal. All in favour.

d. Council Meetings: Council voted on the proposal previously agreed at an Ordinary Meeting to change the schedule of meetings to six per year. All in favour. Dates of all meetings to be agreed.

24/11: IRPW – Adoption of Payments:

Cllr Eynon raised a query as to what happens if a community councillor does not complete a full year. Do they have to repay the mandatory payment for the portion of the year not completed. Clerk to investigate.

Cllr Crowther proposed adoption of the mandatory payments only, to be paid to councillors in December. Cllr Williams seconded the proposal. All voted in favour.

24/12: Staff:

The staff appraisal to be completed in the Summer.

Meeting closed: 19:31